



# Annual Report 2020

*A year of coming together*



Richmond Food Bank Society

100-5800 Cedarbridge Way, Richmond BC V6X 2A7

Charity Number: BN 11907 8228 BC0001

# Table of Contents

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Our History _____                         | i   |
| Message from the President _____          | ii  |
| Message from the Executive Director _____ | iii |
| Activity Report _____                     | 1   |
| Programs _____                            | 1   |
| Our Clients _____                         | 4   |
| Our Staff _____                           | 5   |
| Our Volunteers _____                      | 6   |
| Our Donors and Partners _____             | 8   |
| Communications and Outreach _____         | 9   |
| Statement of Operations _____             | 10  |
| Our Sincere Thanks _____                  | 11  |

# Our History

## Mission

*To be a caring organization providing food assistance, advocacy and related support to community members in need*

## Vision

*A caring community where no one goes hungry*

## Values

*Respect*

*Service*

*Cooperation*

*Accountability*

*Advocacy*

## Motto

*Sharing the bounty of our community with our neighbours in need*

The Richmond Food Bank is a dynamic hub that connects people, food and services that are essential to the health and well-being of our community.

Founded on 6 March 1983 by the congregations of St. Alban Anglican Church and Richmond Presbyterian, the Richmond Food Bank has continuously provided nutritious food for our neighbours in need. Twenty families were served on that first day.

Today, the Richmond Food Bank serves an average of 2200 people every week. We provide nutritious grocery assistance through seven grocery distributions at four different locations, grocery hamper delivery service, breakfast and lunch programs in twelve Richmond schools, and by supplying community partners with food for their programs.

Community spirit shines through every aspect of the food bank operation whether its donating food, money or time, the Richmond community always steps up to help our neighbours in need.

We are a registered charity with a volunteer board of directors.

The Richmond Food Bank is a member of Food Banks BC, Food Banks Canada and Community Food Centres Canada's Good Food Organizations. We also hold membership with many community organizations including Richmond Cares Richmond Gives, Vantage Point, Volunteer Canada, the Richmond Chamber of Commerce, and the Richmond Community Services Advisory Committee.



# Message from the President

Lola Merenda  
*President*

Carol Yan Lau  
*Vice President*

Jennifer Nguyen  
*Treasurer*

Rani Wangsawidjaya  
*Secretary*

Gurleen Aujla  
*Director*

Anne Beetstra  
*Director*

Mamie Cathcart  
*Director*

Dave Elviss  
*Director*

Steve Miller  
*Director*

Ed Montague  
*Director*

Richard Rand  
*Director*

Jeff Smulders  
*Director*

On behalf of the Richmond Food Bank board of directors it is once again my privilege to offer thanks to our donors, staff and volunteers for their generosity, dedication and hard work. Together we continue to work at making a difference in the lives of our neighbours in need.

The COVID-19 pandemic made this past year an especially challenging one but together we made great strides in providing food security to those in need. The generous monetary and food donations from our donors allowed us to continue providing crucial services such as grocery distribution and food deliveries for our community members in need.

Our volunteers worked tirelessly to sort produce, pack grocery bags, deliver food, work at our restructured food distribution window and complete many other necessary and essential tasks. Supporting our volunteers was our dedicated, hardworking staff who worked endlessly to ensure that the needs of over 1400 individuals per week were being met through our collective effort. It is incredible how much can happen when we all work together.

Thank you again for your amazing support during this ongoing crisis. I know we will continue to make a difference in the lives of individuals and families in our community as we look forward to better days ahead.

Warm Regards,



Lola Merenda

President of the Board of Directors

# Message from the Executive Director

In what will be remembered as the most uncertain year by many, 2020 was quite the year for the Richmond Food Bank Society. We served, we learned, we grew, we persevered and we continued to provide an essential service to the most vulnerable in our community.

Together, we were able to meet a 44% increase in the number of clients served compared to the previous year. Many of our existing clients were already struggling before the widespread restrictions on restaurants, retail, tourism and other service industries were announced. Due to these restrictions, our clients got further away from that much awaited paycheck which was evident in the 49% increase in the number of new households accessing the food bank for the first time. Many anxious seniors and families with little children took advantage of our home delivery service which increased 300% since the pandemic hit.

In response to the growing need, we initiated many unconventional strategies. Some of these strategies included extended hours of service, express food hampers, pop-up drive-through accessible food distribution, online client registration, efficient electronic transfers and increased food recovery partnerships. Throughout the pandemic we experienced growth and continued to evolve with each new challenge.

I am grateful and inspired by the amazing spirit, resilience, service and a deep sense of commitment which was exhibited by our staff as well as the volunteers. Each one of them worked against all odds and braved the pandemic with all its uncertainties to serve the increasing number of individuals accessing the food bank.

Beyond all the uncertainty as we work on a restart plan, your support is all the more important during this exciting time. We also want you to know and to share the message that we are here for our neighbours in need whenever they need us. Normal may still be a long journey but we are certain that together, we'll get there.

Sincerely,



Executive Director  
Richmond Food Bank Society

## Staff Team

Alexandra Atkinson  
Client and Volunteer Assistant

Michael Castillo  
Distribution Coordinator

Stuart Clough  
Food Recovery Coordinator

Hajira Hussain  
Executive Director

Will McGuire  
Client Assistant (Dec2020-Feb2021)

Richard Nguyen-Truong  
Logistics Coordinator

Stephanie Shulhan  
Manager-Volunteer Operations

Keith Yee  
General Manager

Judy Ying Sun  
Office Manager (Retired April 2020)

Rick Younie  
Warehouse Manager (Retired July 2020)

## Canada Summer Jobs Staff:

Denise Cheung  
Volunteer Coordinator

Ching Yan (Kara) Ma  
Programs Coordinator

## *Stronger Together*

Our strength lies in our people, who so tirelessly invest their time, energy and resources into our mission. Throughout the pandemic we stayed true to our mission and continued to offer grocery assistance to an average of 1400 individuals every single week of the year.

### *Year in Review:*

- Increased safety precautions throughout the warehouse with zero on site exposures
- Piloted Kitchen Creations project to share food preparation skills among clients and volunteers
- Bid farewell to two long time staff members and welcomed 3 FTEs to our staff team
- Started accepting e-transfers as a donation option
- Enabled online client registration
- Invested in a robust client management system- Link2Feed for efficient client registration and data management
- Offered an express pick up option to our clients as a way to tackle the long lineups and prevent overcrowding
- Engaged the help of a community volunteer group-“COVID-19 Richmond Coming Together” to meet the increased demand for home deliveries
- For the very first time recovered quality perishable and non-perishable food from one of the provincial hubs in Chilliwack

### *Programs:*

**Grocery Distribution Program:** The weekly grocery distribution program continued every single week of the year. Our three offsite distribution sites-Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond Baptist Church and the Steveston United Church site were all suspended temporarily due to Church closures. As restrictions eased up, we resumed our operations first at Peace Mennonite Church and later in the West Richmond Area (closer to the Steveston United Church site). We worked with the City of Richmond to temporarily use this site as a drive-through accessible grocery distribution site. The success of this program will guide our plans for a pop up food distribution site.

The **Community Gardening Program** in its fourth year, engaged a small but enthusiastic bunch of gardening volunteers at the Garratt Wellness Centre community garden plots, while staying safe in an outdoor volunteer environment allowing ample physical distancing. Even in the absence of a grant this year (Food Banks Canada’s +Fresh Gardens and Growing Fund was not offered in 2020; the funds were redirected to emergency responses to the pandemic), the garden program was able to source free seeds and supplies (or use saved seeds, thanks to skills learned

in seed saving workshops in years prior) and grow roughly 500 lbs of fresh produce over the course of the growing season.

The **School Meal Program** was operating in eleven different schools within Richmond with an average of 100 meals per day. With the restrictions at schools, the school meal program was temporarily suspended. We resumed the program supporting 3 different high schools with snacks, bakery and items from the deli.

**Play and Learn Program and the Family Fun Café program** that ran in partnership with the Richmond Family Place, used to average about 200 clients per month. Trained staff from Richmond Family Place engaged with families with young children during our grocery distributions and connected them to resources within Richmond. The children that attended the play and learn area during our grocery distributions had a supervised, colourful, engaging and welcoming place to spend time at. The Family Fun Café program aimed at promoting families to eat together. The healthy 3 course meals were prepared offsite at Richmond Family Place and enjoyed by families at the Richmond Food Bank every Thursday evening prior to our Thursday evening distribution. Both these programs were suspended after March 2020.

The **Knit 2gether program** was concluded with the distribution of beautifully hand knitted toques and scarves. Knitting enthusiasts were able to knit at home and safely deliver fourteen hundred scarves and toques to us. We shared these with our clients in December during our daily distributions.

**Food Recovery:** We recovered a total of 726, 113kgs (1.6M lbs.) of food out of which 75% (539,045kgs or 1.2M lbs.) was perishable food. The total value of food recovered in 2020 was \$4,153,366 according to the food valuation guide established by Food Banks Canada (1kg of recovered food=\$5.7 per kg). All incoming food donations are weighed and tracked on site and it allows us to accurately report all the food that we are able to distribute to our clients as well as our community partners.

We also served close to 25 different community organizations and programs with our surplus bulk food.

In order to supplement our grocery distribution with staple perishable and nonperishable items we also purchased some of our most needed items. The total amount of food purchased was \$16,827kgs (36,890Lbs.)

**Kitchen Creations” Cooking Classes:** We piloted a cooking program funded by Food Banks Canada to promote healthy eating and cooking skills among the people that we serve. We offered these classes during Nutrition Month...just before the restrictions were announced. Some of the workshops included: Good Eats on a Budget, Creative Cooking with Grains and Veggies, Cooking for Self, Cooking for Family

## ***Our Clients***

We continued to provide a dignified and welcoming experience for the 1400 people who turned to us each week for their grocery needs.

For the first time in many years, we were able to provide grocery cards to each one of the households we served not once but 3 times during the year. Funding for the gift cards was made possible through generous grants from the Community Food Centres of Canada, United Way of the Lower Mainland and the Community Foundations of Canada. A total of

In 2020, we registered 782 new households which is equivalent to 2,213 new people who were experiencing food insecurity for the first time. Overall, we served a total of 3,862 unique clients from 1881 households who visited the food bank 30,758 times throughout the year. 27% of the people we serve are children under 18 and about 17% are seniors over the age of 65.

The average number of visits per household is 16 times per year which was a 13% decrease from last year. This was the only statistic that had a decrease which can be due to the fact that people were following public health guidelines of staying home as much as possible. Only 54% of our clients accessed our service every single week while the remainder accessed our service either biweekly or on a monthly basis.



**30,757 Total visits**

**3,690 Unique clients**

**27% Children**

**17% Seniors**

**43% Single People**

**20% New Immigrants**

**11% Single Parent Households**



### **Client Story:**

Just over 10 years ago, Ang Li (Leon) had a job delivering papers and his wife, Jing Lu, was working in a kitchen. With their small income and 3 year old daughter to take care of at the time, they needed help with food costs and found out about the Richmond Food Bank through their church.

Leon says that over the years the support they have gotten "helps [them] a lot", especially with their growing daughter, now 13. When asked what changes if any that he noticed in the quality, quantity and selection of food overall, he said the weekly eggs being given out since COVID-19's impact have been great and he would like to see more staple ingredients like flour and oil being made available as well. Those kinds of items would last longer for he and his family and it would allow them to make more things vs. relying on the deli or other highly processed and packaged foods they feel they get quite a lot of.

He understands the need to switch to hamper style non-perishables vs the choice model we had before and has noticed that there was "less choice but more abundance" of food. Leon misses the food pick-up days that the Food Bank used to have pre-COVID. He feels that the quality of produce can be irregular from week to week, but overall it seems to be better quality than before and hopes for more variety of vegetables in the future. When asked what changes he might like to see as a client, he suggested having short client-survey to collect more information about what kinds of foods people would like to see more of to avoid food going to waste.



## *Our Staff*

Staff members stepped up to the plate and ensured that our clients continued to receive the same level of service in a safe and physically distanced environment. We started offering grocery hampers at the door and went from 11 hours to 29 hours of distribution per week. This allowed us to meet the increased need for safety and physical distancing requirements.

Two of our long serving employees decided to retire from active service. For the past 15 years our Office Manager Judy Ying Sun engaged with our donors, volunteers, clients and community partners, spearheaded the Knit2gether program and ensured that our finances were in order with her excellent bookkeeping. Rick Younie provided a pillar of support to every aspect of our warehouse operation, IT systems as well as the food recovery operations. Losing two of our most experienced staff members with deep institutional knowledge took a lot of trial and error to get things right but we eventually managed.

We recruited new staff members to the RFBS team-Elizabeth Vondette as our new Office Manager and welcomed back Richard Nguyen-Troung as our Logistics Coordinator. We were also able to recruit a Client Assistant to help with our Express Hamper program for a period of 3 months as part of a grant from the Richmond Community Foundation.

Canada Summer Jobs Program allowed greater flexibility with the program and extended the program period from 4 to 9 months. We were funded to hire two staff members through this program each for a period of 12 weeks. Denise Cheung joined us as a Volunteer Coordinator from June to August while Kara Ma joined us as a Program Coordinator from November to February 2021.

Staff participated in various professional development opportunities throughout the year and added value to their personal and professional growth and learning.

- *Elizabeth*: First Aid and CPR/AED certification
- *Hajira*: Social Media and Blogging for Non Profits, Preparing to Pivot Webinar Series-Food Banks Canada
- *Stephanie*: Volunteer Futures Symposium

## ***Our Volunteers***

In 2020, 230 volunteers remained actively engaged via the weekly e-newsletter, social media and other remote methods. We greatly enjoyed receiving notes and email messages from volunteers we were missing while they practiced self-isolation or social distancing.

In keeping with the public health guidelines we came up with creative ways of scheduling volunteers at different times and scheduling couples or members from the same family unit.

About 70 volunteers remained part of our weekly on-site 'skeleton crew', helping to:

- distribute food in 2-person teams at our front door
- pack food hampers
- sort produce
- make home deliveries and pick up donations from the community
- and run our extended daily operations at Cedarbridge Way

Together, these weekly volunteers contributed about 28,620 hours, or 15.7 FTE.

Community volunteers from the COVID-19 Richmond Coming Together group assisted us with the home delivery program and helped us meet the increase in home delivery requests. This group also assisted us with any last minute deliveries to people who were self-isolating or quarantining.

We were unable to host any corporate volunteer groups on-site for safety and health reasons. We hope to engage with our corporate volunteers again when it is safe to do so.

We generally host four volunteer engagement events throughout the year -Tea and Cake Social in February, Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon in April, Volunteer BBQ in August and a Volunteer Potluck in November. We were able to host the Tea and Cake Social and a modified Volunteer Appreciation drive-by/ takeout meal during the holidays. Food for this event was catered by Steveston Seafood House and the first 50 volunteers also got a small token of appreciation from the Richmond Potter's Club.

We also engaged with volunteers at the Coldest Night of the Year (February) and the Walk For Alzheimer's event (virtual) .

### Volunteer Testimonials

*"I joined the RFBS team because I knew it would be a place where I could make a difference helping people who require our services in tough times, and also I have a friend who has been volunteering for many years here and told me about it. Also, I enjoy socializing with people.*

*The work at RFBS is important...it gives families a little peace of mind, knowing that they themselves or their families will not go hungry.*

*The Richmond community has opened their hearts, either by donations of food or monetary donations. Thank you, Richmond, for your generosity." (Sandra)*

*"I have many fond memories of my days at the foodbank. The connection with the clients, many of whom had great stories to tell, and the many friendships I have made there." (Pauline)*

*"I first joined the Food Bank in 2009 as I wanted to volunteer at something meaningful in the community.*

*My favorite memories are getting to know the people: Clients, Volunteers, and Staff (I love the harmony of the multi cultures present.)*

*I'm really missing the comradery of clients, volunteers, and staff during Covid.*

*My message: Hugs...they are still allowed this way." (Joan)*

*"I volunteered because I wanted to give back to the community. Because you meet so many good people... it keeps us young. My message to the community: Listen to Dr Bonnie Henry. Don't get upset; just follow her guidelines and it will get better soon." (Frank)*

## *Donors and Community Partners*

Several community groups, local businesses, schools, service clubs continued to support our work through safe and alternative measures while following the public health guidelines. Many organizations and companies including but not limited to the Richmond Auto Mall, Peterson, Porte Group, Pacific Coastal, Dupuis Langen, Forever Young Club, Nature's Path, McArthurGlen and Steveston Seafood House got creative and helped us online or remotely to raise monetary donations.

Ongoing community support combined with our partnerships with existing food retailers and distributors ensured a steady flow of incoming donation of food donations. The Richmond Auto Mall's holiday food drive, the BC Thanksgiving food drive and School District's fundraiser led by their youth clubs were some of the notable annual fundraising initiatives that got the whole community engaged in support of the Richmond Food Bank Society.

Organizations donating over \$10,000



Before March 2020, important non-food support was made possible through collaborations with community partners which included Richmond Family Place, Vancouver Coastal Health, University of British Columbia (UBC) and BC Institute of Technology (BCIT). Nursing students from BCIT and UBC assisted with our Information & Wellness Centre, providing blood pressure clinics and health information. Dental Hygienist from Vancouver Coastal Health provided oral health checkups and made referrals for further care. Richmond Family Place provided the much loved and appreciated Play & Learn program and the Family Fun Café to foster quality parent child bonding and connect families with other programs and resources in the community.

## ***Communications and Outreach***

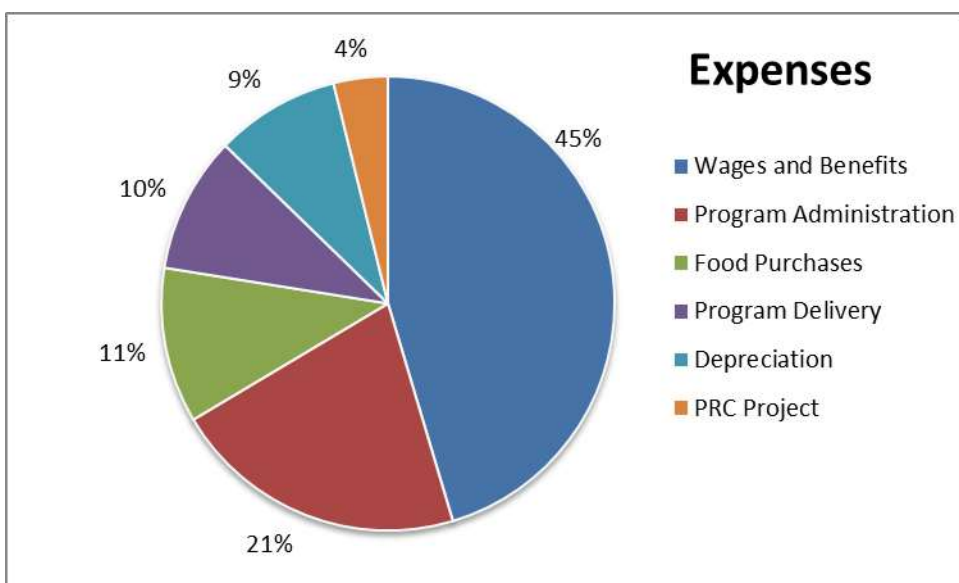
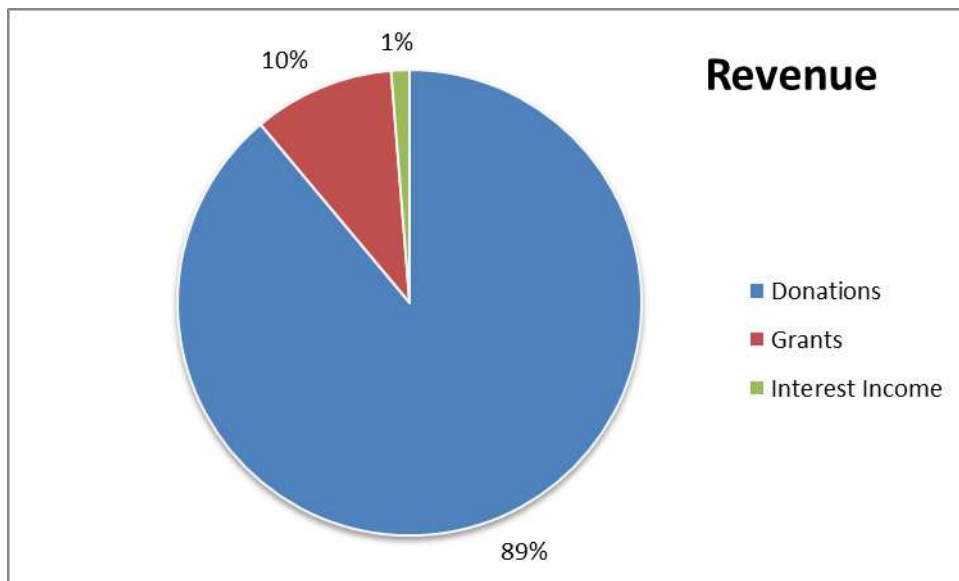
Many in-person meetings were transformed into virtual meetings. Outreach especially with community partners became so much more convenient as it cut down on the travel time and ensured increased participation.

We continued to engage with different community organizations through our participation on committees such as the Richmond Community Services Advisory Committee, Food Aid Delivery Coalition, City of Richmond's UBCM project committee and the newly formed Richmond Poverty Reduction Coalition which got its society status in July 2020. Participation on committees allowed us to share information about our work and our services with the different nonprofits throughout Richmond.

Prior to March 2020, we regularly hosted many community agencies who shared information with our clients at our main location during our grocery distributions. Some of these organizations include the Richmond Public Library, Fortis BC, S.U.C.C.E.S.S, Richmond Multi Cultural Service Society, Avia Employment Services and BC Responsible and Problem Gambling Association.

# Statement of Operations

We are grateful to all the individuals, businesses, social clubs and foundations for supporting our work during the pandemic in so many new and innovative ways. Many businesses that supported us with food drives opted to support us through online donation drives. This was the reason online donations saw the highest amount of growth when compared to other forms of donations. These valuable donations strengthened our programs and allowed us to provide better quality and quantity of food to an increasing number of individuals who accessed and continue to access our services.



Program Administration: Rent, Insurance, Advertising, Professional Fees, Utilities, Training and Professional Development, Vehicle and Forklift, Volunteer Expenses

Program Delivery: Client Outreach, Warehouse Supplies, Goods Purchases, Garbage and Compost, Office Supplies, Repair and Maintenance, Membership, Security Systems

## ***With Sincere Thanks***

We are truly thankful to each and every member from within and outside the RFB community-who helped us help our neighbours in need. The unwavering support and trust that was invested in our work as well as the lessons learned over this past year will continue to guide our work moving forward. As neighbours helping neighbours, we have learned to be kind, calm and safe. The best lesson that we have learned is the fact that as a community, we are stronger together.